CLAIM AMENDMENTS

1. - 2. (Canceled)

3. (Previously Presented) The implement of claim 21, wherein the rigid structure is permanently or temporarily attached to the side portions of the band.

4. (Canceled)

5. (Previously Presented) The implement of claim 21, wherein the rigid structure is attached to the side portions of the band using a hook-and-loop fastener.

6. (Previously Presented) The implement of claim 21, further including an intermediate layer disposed between the inner surface of the band and the skin of a wearer.

7. (Previously Presented) The implement of claim 21, further including an intermediate, perforated layer disposed between the inner surface of the band and the skin of a wearer.

8. (Previously Presented) The implement of claim 21, further including a cushioning or thermal-insulating layer inside the band.

9. (Previously Presented) The implement of claim 21, further including a cushioning or thermal-insulating outside the band.

10. - 18. (Canceled)

19. (Previously Presented) The implement of claim 21, wherein:
the rigid structure includes a shoe, boot, or fin.

20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently Amended) A body-worn implement, comprising:

a flexible, continuous band adapted to completely encircle a calf portion of a human leg extending entirely through the band and terminating in an end portion which the band does not cover ~~, the leg terminating in an end portion not covered by the band~~;

the band having an inner surface that is initially spaced apart from the skin of a wearer and an outer surface with opposing outer side portions; [[and]]

a port ~~facilitating evacuation of~~ in pneumatic communication with the space between the inner surface of the band and the skin of the wearer, the port facilitating evacuation of the space so that the band makes intimate, slip-free contact with the skin; and

a rigid structure coupled to the side portions of the band, the rigid structure including a portion that extends around and past the end portion of the leg, thereby transferring loads to the band and calf portion as opposed to the end portion of the leg during ambulation.

22. (Previously Presented) The implement of claim 21, wherein the rigid structure includes a cast.